

PASTOR'S NOTES

Christmas - *the gift that defines all giving!!*

Christmas is always a special day, especially for children as they tear into their Christmas gifts and their spirits leap for joy when they get something they really wanted. Gift-giving is a treasured way of showing our love for other people.

Of all the gifts ever shared in all of human history **Christians believe the Christmas gift of the Christ Child defines all measures of love-giving.**

Christmas celebrates the mystery of the Incarnation when God assumed our human nature or as the Prologue of John's Gospel declares — *"In the beginning was the Word, the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God ... the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."* Every time we pray the Creed we say, *"... he came down from heaven and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man."* Of this the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) says: *"Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith."* (463)

All of this leads to a very logical question – **Why did God assume our human nature?** St. Peter Chrysologus gives the over-arching answer when he says the human race takes its origin from two men – Adam the first man and Christ the second man. The first man (Adam) was made by the second man (Christ). Christ had stamped his image and likeness on the first Adam when he created him. Adam's sin has deprived us of God's likeness. This is why Christ took on himself the role and name of the first Adam – **in order that he might not lose what he had made in his image.** That is why Scripture says of Christ, "I am the first and the last." In essence the Father's gift of Christ (the second man) restores the goodness lost by Adam (the first man).

In paragraphs 456-460 the Catechism of the Catholic Church says the Word became flesh for four (4) reasons:

- (1) The Word became flesh for us in order **to save us** by reconciling us with God. St. Gregory of Nyssa says it this way, *"Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; ... We had lost possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us to the light; captives, we awaited a Savior; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Did they (meaning the human race) not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?"*
- (2) The Word became flesh so that thus we might **know God's love.** As John's Gospel says, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* [Jn. 3:16]
- (3) The Word became flesh to be our **model of holiness.** As John's Gospel has Christ saying, *"I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me."* [Jn. 14:6]
- (4) The Word became flesh to make us **partakers of the divine nature.** St. Athanasius puts it this way, *"For the Son of God became man so that we might become God."* St. Thomas Aquinas says it this way, *"The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods."*

Such is the gift of Christmas and why Christmas is the gift that defines all giving. It is in this spirit that we say – **'Merry Christmas'!!!**

**St. Leo's Advent Reconciliation Service is scheduled for
Monday, December 21st at 7 p.m.**



St. Leo's Catholic Church
211 Langer Ave North
PO Box 340
Casselton ND
347-4609

St. Thomas Catholic Church
401 Third St. North
PO Box 22
Buffalo ND
633-5150



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 20, 2020

Weekend Mass Schedule for St. Leo's and St. Thomas

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays: 8:30 am St. Thomas, 10:30 am St. Leo's

2nd & 4th Sundays: 8:30 am St. Leo's, 10:30 am St. Thomas

Every Saturday: 5:00 pm at St. Leo's

Mass Intentions for the week of Dec 20:

Mon - Dec 21 - 9:00 am - +**Donald Mergner** by Marian Watson

Tues - Dec 22 - 9:00 am - St. Thomas - +**Souls in purgatory**

St. Leo's - NO MASS

Wed - Dec 23 - 9:00 am - **Ron Browning** by Richard & Joanne Browning

Thurs- Dec 24- Christmas Eve- 5:00 pm- Mass for St. Thomas parishioners only

9:00 pm - Carols begin at St. Leo's

9:30 pm - St. Leo's - +**Chris Volk** by Jerry & DeLilah Volk

Fri - Dec 25 - Christmas Day - St. Leo's 10:00 am - +**Greg Dimmer** by Renee Dimmer

Sat - Dec 26 - 5:00 pm - +**Dam Chi Dung** by Ron & Thuy Kaufman

Sun - Dec 27 - St. Leo's - 8:30 am - +**Greg Dimmer** by Renee Dimmer

St. Thomas - 10:30 am - For the people of our parishes

Parish Staff:

Pastor: Fr. James Ermer

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Secretary: Delores Grommesh

Phone: 701-347-4609

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Prayer Chain:

Bea Bachmeier: 347-5555

Kelsey Lako: 793-7088

Maintenance: Paul & Sherry Radermacher

Phone: 701-793-7740; 701-793-7798

St. Leo's Directors: Mark Rehovsky & Dave Glennon

St. Thomas Directors: Larry Zaun & Gary Milbrandt

Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Leo's

4:00 - 4:45 pm Saturday

at St. Thomas

8:00 - 8:15 am

before all 8:30 am Masses

~ Anytime by appointment

~ Communal Services during
Advent and Lent

New Members: If you are new to the area, we would love to have you as a registered member. To register as a new member of the parish, please visit with Fr. Ermer after Mass.

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Please join in praying the Rosary  
25 minutes before the Saturday evening  
and Sunday morning Mass times.


## PARISH EVENTS/MEETINGS

Sun., Dec 20 - 11:30 am - KC Grab & Go cinnamon/caramel rolls after 10:30 am Mass  
 Sun., Dec 20 - 4:00 pm - RE 10<sup>th</sup> Grade class in the Spirit of Life Center  
**Mon., Dec 21 - 7:00 pm - Advent Reconciliation Service at St. Leo's**  
 Wed., Dec 23 - NO RE Classes at St. Leo's and St. Thomas  
**Thurs., Dec 24 - Christmas Eve - 5:00 pm - Mass at St. Thomas in Buffalo, sign up only**  
**Thurs., Dec 24 - Christmas Eve - 9:00 pm Carols followed by Mass at 9:30 pm**  
**Fri., Dec 25 - Christmas Day - 10:00 am Mass at St. Leo's**  
 Sun., Dec 27 - **NO Beverage and Bite** after 8:30 am Mass  
 Thurs., Dec 31 - 5:00 pm - Solemnity of Mary/Holy Day Vigil Mass at St. Thomas in Buffalo  
 Fri., Jan 1 - 10:00 am - Solemnity of Mary/Holy Day Mass at St. Leo's



**GIFTS for THE CHILD:** We will again be collecting items to be shared with those in need. As in the past we have donated to some of the agencies that work with expectant parents. So formula, diapers, clothing and toys are very much appreciated. Monetary donations can also be turned in to the parish office.

### Upcoming Ministry Schedule

|  | Saturday Dec 26<br>5:00 pm<br>St. Leo's                                                                                                                                 | Sunday Dec 27<br>8:30 am<br>St. Leo's | Sunday Dec 27<br>10:30 am<br>St. Thomas |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Lector                                                                             | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p><b>Please see<br/>Sign-Up Sheets<br/>in the Church<br/>entry.</b></p> </div> |                                       | Gary Milbrandt                          |
| Eucharistic Ministers                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                       |                                         |
| Altar Servers                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                       | Gavin Besette                           |
| Offertory Collectors                                                               | Volunteers needed                                                                                                                                                       | Volunteers needed                     | Gary & Linda Milbrandt                  |
| Gift Bearers                                                                       | Volunteers needed                                                                                                                                                       | Volunteers needed                     |                                         |

## NEWS AND NOTES

### St. Leo's Advent Reconciliation Service Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm

Along with Fr. Ermer, there will be three other priests available to hear confessions.



**Church Decorating:** If you would like to help prepare the church for Christmas, we will be decorating at **9:00 am on Thurs., Dec 24<sup>th</sup>**. Young and old are welcome!

**Ministry sign-up:** We are looking for help with Readers, Mass servers, and EMHCs for our Christmas and New Year liturgies. Please sign up on the schedule in the church entry.

**Christmas Eve:** We are looking for families to help carry up the figurines for the manger scene as well as the gift donations. We plan to do it with safe distancing. If you will be at Mass on Christmas Eve, and can help, sign up in the church entry. Thanks!

### Please Note:

St. Thomas Church will have Christmas Eve Mass at 5:00 pm. Because of limited seating at St. Thomas Church, this year the

- > **Christmas Eve Mass at St. Thomas will be only for St. Thomas parishioners**
- > they must **sign up on or before Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>** if they want to be seated.
- > St. Thomas parishioners are also welcome to attend either of the Christmas Masses at St. Leo's.

**Prayers and Sympathy:** Our Parish communities extend our deepest sympathies to Doug & Lori Howard and family on the death of Doug's Dad, Ralph Howard and to the families of Marian Kasowski and Claudia Von Bank.

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. — Matthew 5:4*



### Help Support our Cameroon Card Mission

Cards are available for purchase in the magazine rack in church entry. Cost of cards is 50¢ please place money in envelope provided and return to parish office. All proceeds go to the mission.

### This week's Stewardship moment:

*"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" - Luke 1:28*

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.